

# Stray Leaves,

Gathered from the Wildwood

BY

FRANK PORTER.

*"Earth's Briars strew the glade,  
Eden's Roses never fade."*

MOUNT FOREST:

PRINTED AT THE CONFEDERATE CHEAP BOOK AND JOB OFFICE.  
1880.

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## PREFACE.

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When evening throws her shades around the poet's head and when he is left to himself, what ideas crowd upon the mind scarcely able to endure the inundation! Soft and holy whispers breath upon his placid heart, and he feels, stealing over his enraptured soul, the soothing influences of such an almost hallowed calm as words have never yet described! Such were the feelings of the author, who, though young, and a very stripling in the Muse's nursery, yet would claim your indulgence,—yet would request an unbiassed mind to peruse these short poems.

When such a man as Lord Byron has written poems it may appear presumptuous to tread in his steps, and to attempt, though very unworthily, to clothe the beautiful ideas of nature in a poetical garment. It only remains for the writer of "Stray Leaves" to say that if these little verses should please even one heart he would deem himself amply repaid.

F. W. P.

ERRATTA.—In the poem entitled "Winnie," in the last stanza and the third line from the bottom, on page 15, the word "piece" should read "peace."

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DEDICATORY LINES—TO BERTHA.

Stray leaves of early spring,  
By other leaves and fruit of summer shaded,  
Too early in their first fair blossoming,  
Now almost faded.

I scarce might offer these poor leaves to thee  
Did not thine eyes their earlier beauty see.

Stray leaves of early bloom,  
Ere life's long summer day hath told its story,  
Ere autumn comes, with less of sweet perfume,  
But mellowed glory.

I scarce to thee these withered leaves may give  
But that thy dear approval bids them live.

Stray leaves from distant hills  
Or dales, where we have often strayed together,  
Beechen and maple, gathered by the rills  
In sunny weather.

Memorials sweet I could not bring to thee  
Had not love's fingers gathered them for me.

Stray leaves are these, I ween,  
Long years ago from hallowed branches broken,  
And leaves of roses gathered fresh and green—  
Love's latest token.

Poor though their odor or their beauty be  
They had not known life's sunshine but for thee.

## SONG OF THE ROSE.

I am fair  
Beyond compare,  
I am sweetest of the sweet;  
Tints grow pale,  
Odors fail,  
When with mine they would compete.

Poets' lays  
Ever praise,  
Ever call me beauty's queen;  
Painter's try  
Lovingly  
To portray my charms serene.

What can please  
Honey bees  
Like a revel in my bowers?  
Butterflies  
In glad surprise  
Poise themselves upon my flowers.

Better fame  
Still I claim—  
As I'm sweet, so I'm kind;  
Though I'm queen  
Of gardens seen  
Not to grandeur I'm confined.

Smiling round  
The cot I'm found,  
Rich and poor alike I bless,  
Give my bloom  
And sweet perfume  
Even to the wilderness.

## TO BERTHA DE P——W.

Coming through the garden,  
 Tripping through the corn,  
 Past the fragrant meadows,  
 In the flush of morn;  
 I met a maiden, lovely  
 As that morning's dew,—  
 Bertha, sweet and gentle,  
 Beautiful and true.

Queen of all the village,  
 Bertha, dear, thou art—  
 True and noble beauty,  
 Gushing from the heart;  
 First-fruits of sweet promise,  
 When the spring is gone,  
 Of the splendid summer  
 Drawing swiftly on.

Large-eyed, wondering Bertha,  
 With the classic grace  
 Seated on thy forehead,  
 Floating o'er thy face;  
 Wouldst thou read the future  
 What its burden saith?—  
 Draw no veil assunder  
 That to hope is Death.

This heart with love's own glory  
 And pulsing blood doth thrill;  
 For who could see thy lustre  
 Yet gaze unconquered still?  
 O dainty, dainty Bertha,  
 Tripping o'er the green,  
 To one true captive spirit  
 Thou art always queen!

## TO VICTORIA,

DAUGHTER OF H. R. H. PRINCESS CHRISTIAN.

Fair Victoria! England's daughter,  
 Far across the Atlantic water;  
 Blithe and happy, merry maiden,  
 Listen to a young Canadian,  
 Whilst he would for thee express  
 Earnest hopes of bright success,  
 With the morning star of glory  
 Bright and radiant, beaming o'er thee,  
 Refreshed each morn with heavenly dew  
 May'st thou thy queenly way pursue;  
 Thy maiden heart be filled with grace  
 To run the strait and narrow race;  
 Earth's false alloy left far behind  
 For inward adorning of the mind—  
 A gem St. Paul declares to be  
 Enduring as eternity.

May thy path be ever lighted  
 With the Light of lights divine;  
 Thy dreams of joy be never blighted,  
 Thy star of hope ne'er cease to shine;  
 Thy way through earth be bright and fair,  
 All free from sorrow, pain or care;  
 When life's autumn draweth nigh,  
 When age shall dim that sparkling eye,  
 When Death shall send his dart at last,  
 When Jordan's stormy flood is past,  
 May'st thou thy Saviour's face behold  
 And tread with Him those streets of gold,  
 There may'st thou dwell, with sins forgiven,  
 A princess in the courts of Heaven!

## OUR INNER LIFE.

Each has a secret self, an inner life  
     Of hopes and fears,  
 High aspirations, doubtings, calm and strife,  
     And joy and tears.  
 No eye but God's within the veil can look;  
     Unto the world  
 The human heart is an unopened book—  
     A banner furl'd;  
 A mighty ocean to whose lowest deeps  
     We cannot see—  
 A secret treasury, of which Heaven keeps  
     The master-key.  
 An unsolved, awful, mystery sublime  
     Ne'er understood—  
 A battlefield, where virtue strives with crime,  
     Evil with good.  
 The angels of our kind and adverse fate  
     Are marshalled there:  
 Light grappling with grim darkness, love with hate,  
     Hope with despair.  
 None e'er can pass the secret inner door  
     That guards the heart:  
 It is a crypt oneself cannot explore  
     In every part.  
 We are not as we seem—for oft the eye  
     Belies the breast:  
 The lips cry "peace" when haggard care is nigh  
     And wild unrest.  
 Measure the sunbeams—compass sea and land—  
     Creation's plan  
 Find out!—'Twere easier than to understand  
     The heart of man.

THE FLOWERS.

---

I looked upon the flowers, in the earliest of the  
day,  
And I saw there was some moisture that on their  
petals lay ;  
I wondered why their loveliness was dimmed  
with many a tear,  
While nature smil'd so pleasant, for the sun  
shone bright and clear.  
I gazed with fondness on them, and took a  
survey 'round,  
And saw some of the fairest hung, despairing,  
near the ground ;  
It seem'd as though, o'ercharged with grief,  
their strength had giv'n way,  
And they needed comfort and support, their  
sorrow to allay.  
What makes these tear-drops come, say ? lovely  
flowers, cloth'd in sadness,  
Did you weep because the night had no power  
to give you gladness ?  
Could there be no pleasures found in the gloom  
and chill of night,  
So you wished for the kindly warmth of the  
sun's effulgent light ?  
I waited for an answer ; and the sun's mag-  
netic power  
Threw strong light upon them, and wiped tears  
from every flower,  
And I saw they grew stronger, and their colors,  
rich and gay,  
Looked beautiful as ever, in the glories of mid-  
day.

I saw their tears were dewdrops, soft, descended  
 from above,  
 Waters from the purest fountains, sweet mes-  
 sengers of love ;  
 And my heart went rejoicing at the mystery  
 and power  
 That giveth to this world of ours the beauties  
 of the flower.

---

THE LILIES.

---

Lilies, with your golden hue,  
 Glistening in the morning dew,  
 Who more richly rob'd than you?  
 Kings cannot, with all their state,  
 Your fair glory emulate.

But, sweet lilies, you must rot,  
 All your beauty be forgot,  
 One short day, and you are not ;  
 We, who are but common clay,  
 Shall outshine your bright array.

For the same Creative Power  
 Who has bid you live and flower,  
 Who hath fed you with His shower,  
 Has a fairer world than this  
 For the choice ones that are His.

In a land of golden light,  
 Clad in robes of snowy white,  
 Ever living, ever bright,  
 They their voices high upraise,  
 To exalt their Maker's praise.

## WINNIE.

Winnie, lovely Winnie,  
Child so fair and free ;  
Eyes of sparkling lustre,  
Full of girlish glee !  
Graceful little maiden,  
Innocent and pure ;  
Sweet and happy childhood,  
May it long endure !  
Winnie, smiling Winnie,  
Child of sunny brow ;  
May thy smile be ever  
Beautiful as now !  
May earth's darker sorrows  
Never 'round thee fling  
Shade of sin or sadness  
Or unholy thing !  
May the sun of gladness  
Ever smile on thee ;  
Be thy way terrestrial  
Ever pure and free !  
May no clouds that linger  
'Round the haunts of sin  
Ever dim the glory  
Of the light within !  
May the blessed Jesus  
Keep the e'er in sight,  
Flood thy heart with gladness  
And thy path with light !  
May the Father clasp thee  
In His fond embrace ;  
May the Spirit fill thee  
With its saving grace !

Lead thee on to Jesus,  
 To the Lamb of God ;  
 Pointing out the journey  
 That the Saviour trod !  
 The stars of azure heaven  
 In the vault above  
 Beam upon thy earthway,  
 Radiant with love !

May no thorns thy way beset ;  
 But the Rose's bloom,  
 The Daisy and the Violet  
 Sprinkle their perfume !  
 When the swiftly passing years  
 Tinge with autumn shading,  
 May sweet Winnie's soul appear  
 Beautiful, unfading !

When earthly things are almost past,  
 When evening follows sure and fast,  
 When shall gather Death's cold mist  
 'Round the hills of amethyst,  
 When the last great trump shall sound,  
 May sweet Winnie Park be found  
 First of all the angel guests  
 At the Lamb's great bridal feast ;  
 When has ceased the battle's din,  
 When the hosts are gathered in  
 To the mansions, bright and fair,  
 May sweet Winnie Park be there ;  
 May the light that ne'er goes down  
 Glance upon her golden crown,  
 Lighting up her blest abode  
 With the joy and piece of God ;  
 May she dwell, with sins forgiven,  
 A princess in the courts of Heaven !

## THE TAY BRIDGE DISASTER.

*"Loosed from this bond on the Sabbath Day."*

Glad with life's joyfulness,  
Thoughts full of meetings ;  
Never a care knew they ;  
Thoughts but of greetings ;  
Welcomes to festive board,  
Happy reunion,  
Hearts' sweet response again,  
Loving communion.

The engine with panting breath,  
    To many lives bearing ;  
Throwing o'er all its wreath—  
O'er those condemned to death ;  
    On wildly tearing ;  
    They were not caring,  
Neared they to loving friend,  
Neared they life's journey's end,  
    No frowns were they wearing.

Wild blew the wind amain,  
Shrieked o'er the passing train,  
    Moaning its death dirge ;  
One brief, bright burst of light,  
Then all was darkest night ;  
    Then, beneath wave surge,  
Rushed they to Jesus' sight,  
    Passed they o'er death's verge.

One bright gleam of moonlight  
     Sprang out from cloud-veil ;  
 Showed man's great workmight,  
     Shone out on passing sail.  
 Then darkness reigned there,  
     Wearing a death-pall ;  
 Till broke by moonbeams fair ;  
     Glittering o'er all,  
 Shewed wreck and ruin bare,  
     Man's great works downfall.

On hissed the foaming wave,  
 Roaring o'er many a grave ;  
     Its chant funeral ;  
 Down in the depths below,  
 Borne on by restless flow,  
 Bodies to restplace go,  
     Where, immaterial.

Wild blew the wintry wind  
 Leaving sad trace behind ;  
     But those who breathed it  
 A little while ago,  
 Now lying far below,  
     Their wail bequeathed it.

And roaming far o'er earth,  
 An echo brings to birth ;  
 Mankind for mankind crying,  
 Pitying the orphans' cries,  
 Drying bereaved ones' eyes,  
 Striving to hush their sighing.

"Loosed from this bond on the Sabbath day ;"  
 Some found release 'neath the rolling Tay,  
 Aye, found release from trial and sorrow ;  
 Care of to-day merged in joy of the morrow.

# RETURN TO DURHAM AFTER AN ABSENCE OF FOUR YEARS.

Once again I greet thee, Durham, greet the town  
to me so dear ;  
Bright and fair and sweet as ever all thy hallowed  
haunts appear ;  
But the hopes, so fondly cherished, in the long  
four years ago,—  
Dashed aside, all blasted—broken, at my feet  
are lying low.

Once more I wander through woods—the same  
old flow'ry wood—  
And see the more than holy spot where long ago  
I stood,  
While childhoods fair, enchanting bloom was  
still around me cast,  
Before the cold, bleak winds of earth had chilled  
me with their blast.

Oh, then this heart of mine seemed bounding,  
leaping in its lightness,  
And joy's pure radiant sunshine e'en trembled in  
its brightness.  
The paths of peace seemed straight before, and  
not one cloud appeared  
To dim the brightness of the hopes—all withered  
now and sered.

Sweet and happy dreams—like summer buds  
unfolding—  
While still this hand of mine the opal meral  
wreath seemed holding—

Would awaken rich feelings within my careless  
breast

And lend to life and all its charms a pure and  
fervent zest.

And now again I'll strive to live the same old life  
of joy,

I'll cast away the chains of earth, and all earth's  
false alloy,

I'll give my sinful heart to God—if He will have  
it so—

And find the peace, in Durham now, I found four  
years ago.

---

### LITTLE DAISY.

---

Kiss me, kiss me, dancing Daisy,

Little maiden, blithe and crazy,

Nothing of the future recking,

Of the things that follow after,

Only dancing, only decking,

Baby brows with baby laughter;

Bubbling laughter, weaving, dancing;

Silver starbeam! Gleaming, glancing,

In and out among our kisses—

Little spirit of our blisses;

Fairy feet that touch and tinkle,

Lissome legs that twine and twinkle,

Sunny ringlets, flowing, flinging,

Merry mouth, a home of singing,

Childish face so angel tender,

Childish form so airy slender;

Dancing always, blithe and crazy,

Elvish dances, mystic, mazy,—

Kiss me, kiss me, darling Daisy!

## I ASK NO CROWN.

I ask no crown in that fair land  
So famed in song and story ;  
I ask no name or title grand,  
No honor and no glory.

I ask no high, exalted seat  
Above some humble brother ;  
I fain would sit at wisdom's feet  
But not outrank another.

Nor do I crave an easy task,  
Devoid of toil or duty,  
While in the light of heaven I bask,  
And gaze on fadeless beauty.

I hope to spend unnumbered days,  
Beside the crystal river  
And join unending songs of praise  
Unto the Gracious Giver.

And yet I would a worker be  
Nor ever idle sitting ;  
For he has done so much for me—  
Such rest would not be fitting.

For short on earth our time to work  
And very ill we do it ;  
We see misdeeds and errors lurk  
Throughout—when we review it.

There in the land that knows no night,  
The peerless, painless Aiden,  
Fit labor would be my delight  
Where none are overladen.

## TO LILY IN HEAVEN.

O Lily, we mourn thy departure,  
 We miss thy loved face here below,  
 But where the free souls and glad hearts are  
 My Lily is blooming, I know.

Oh ! why should I weep for my loved one,  
 Though they laid her cold clay 'neath the sod  
 I know that her spirit now resteth  
 In its home in the palace of God.

But did the cold flood chill with terror  
 Thy heart, as thou wast passing o'er,  
 Or were thine eyes fixed on the glory  
 That shines on that glittering shore.

On the Light which no cloud ever shadeth,  
 Where the fields are all green and all vernal,  
 Where nought that is beautiful fadeth  
 But bloometh for aye and eternal.

E'en the waters we deem cold and bitter,  
 Sweet Lily, perchance, did unfold,  
 To thee all the sweetness and glory  
 That saints, passing over, have told.

Perchance a bright ray of the sunshine  
 From Him thou did'st love when below,  
 Did light the dark flood with its glory  
 This, Lily, we cannot now know.

But, oh ! the frail bark could not founder,  
 Though high on its billows did ride,  
 The colors were those of the Master  
 Whose voice rules the tempest and tide.

And safely to port he would bear it,  
 Though mountains, to wreck it, would move;  
 For they who sail under his banner  
 Shall know of the power of His love.

Oh, Lily, dear angel in Heaven!  
 With garments the glorified wear;  
 How pure is thy robe in its whiteness,  
 Beyond all we here can compare.

Soon, Lily, the boat will be coming  
 To carry me o'er the dark tide,  
 May I, too, go forth with the Saviour,  
 For Captain and Refuge and Guide.

Then safely I'll reach that blest haven  
 Where beams the bright evergreen shore,  
 And join my sweet Lily in Heaven  
 In praising the Lamb evermore.

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### LOVE'S AWAKENING.

---

TO ZYNTHIA.

---

Unvail, unvail, dear Zynthia,  
 Thy radiant orbs of brown,  
 Put by the flossy 'broidery,  
 Put on thy silken gown;

Thy pearl-gemmed necklace quickly,  
 Clasp round thy neck so fair,  
 And in those glossy ringlets  
 Bind roses rich and rare;

For see, yon knight is coming !  
 He rideth hard and fast,  
 And of thy girlish freedom  
 This day may be the last !  
 Look up, look up, dear Zynthia,  
 The glorious stars so bright,  
 Are rivalled by the splendor,  
 Of your glowing orbs to-night ,  
 Your cheeks are like twin roses,  
 Whose smiles so sweetly play,  
 I fain would be the lover  
 To pluck those sweets away ;  
 And your laugh so like the ringing  
 Of silver bells in June,  
 The heart must be a-weary  
 It could not keep in tune !  
 Awake, awake, dear Zynthia !  
 The time for dreaming dreams  
 Is past and gone forever,  
 In the light of young love's beams ;  
 And the flowers of girlish friendship  
 Will droop and fade away,  
 In the newly dawning glory  
 Of love's awakening day ;  
 Your soul's best room make ready,  
 Love comes—he cannot wait ;  
 E'en now—your blushes tell me—  
 He's knocking at the gate !  
 Ah ! bonny, bonny, Zynthia,  
 The breath of orange flowers  
 Comes sweetly wafted to thee,  
 In love's enchanting hours !

You have stolen life's best sunshine  
 To brighten your glad days,  
 And stolen all our hearts, too,  
 With loving, winning ways;  
 But yon knight, yon knight is coming,  
 Lay Friendships armor down,  
 Put by its silver helmet,  
 Put on Love's golden crown!

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GATES AJAR!

Little eyes just wide awake—  
 Gates ajar—without a doubt;  
 What a world of light looks in!  
 What a world of love looks out!  
 Gates ajar—through silken lashes  
 Life's young sunbeams dance and play;  
 Gleams and flashes from a fountain  
 Bright and clear, though far away.  
 Gates ajar—bright little windows,  
 Where joy shows her laughing face,  
 Free from care and without wrinkle,  
 Faultless in her artless grace.  
 Gates ajar—sly furtive glances,  
 Coquetting with love's own speech;  
 Tinting all with hues of gladness  
 Which their mirthful eyes can reach.  
 Gates ajar—ah! through those eyelids  
 Shines a world of mystery,  
 Flashing light upon our darkness,  
 If the truth our eyes could see.  
 Through those gates sweet music passes,  
 Few can hear and fewer bear;  
 Solemn teachings—Christ's own lessons—  
 Light beyond the smile and tear.

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